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First Lady & Secretary Gassman Launch Art Contest

First Lady Jessica Doyle and Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development Secretary Roberta Gassman officially declared the 2007 safety calendar art contest underway Thursday during a visit and tour of the new Allied Family Center of the Boys & Girls Club of Dane County.

The department's Division of Worker's Compensation distributes approximately 4,000 calendars to employers statewide to promote job safety. The 2007 calendar will be the second using children's art to illustrate a monthly safety tip.

"This year, we have invited Boys & Girls Clubs throughout the state to participate in the contest, and I am glad the Boys & Girls Club of Dane County has agreed to help us launch this effort," Secretary Gassman said.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for children to develop their creative talents and help us promote safety on the job," First Lady Doyle said. As with last year's competition, she will help select the winners.

Secretary Gassman said that Wisconsin, a heavy industry state, has a better safety record than other states. The latest U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics show Wisconsin had 94 workplace fatalities in 2004, or approximately three per 100,000 workers, compared with a national rate of four per 100,000 workers. In 2003, Wisconsin had 103 workplace fatalities.

To promote job safety, the department joins the Wisconsin Council of Safety annually in honoring employers with awards for excellent safety records. Secretary Gassman said the safety calendar is part of this broad effort. By inviting Boys & Girls Club members to participate, the contest serves an added purpose of educating children about safety.

"The children of today are our workers of tomorrow," Secretary Gassman said. "Soon these club members will be entering the workforce as teens, and we want not only their first work experience, but everyone's first day on the job to begin and remain injury free."

Following the announcement, the First Lady and Secretary Gassman toured the \$3.2 million Allied Family Center that opened last month.